



Doolittle Raiders

Week of 18 April 2007 – 24 April 07

Legendary Airmen unite for 65th anniversary of historical flight

On April 18, 1942, 16 Army Air Corps B-25 medium bombers lifted off the Navy carrier Hornet to accomplish a dangerous mission that seemed impossible. President Franklin D. Roosevelt wanted a daring air assault over Japan in response to the surprise attack on Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, Dec. 7, 1941.

The order was carried out by Lt. Col. James Doolittle, who led a group of 80 volunteers. The mission was to bomb five major cities on the home island of Japan, to include Tokyo. They flew for more than 15 hours. None had the fuel to make it to their landing destination, and they flew until they ran out of gas. Ten planes were abandoned after crews bailed out, five crash-landed and one flew to Russia.

Fifty men jumped out of their planes into a stormy night over China. Most of the men eventually made it back home safely, but some were executed, some drowned and some were taken prisoner. In Lt. Col. Doolittle's mind, the mission was a failure since all 16 aircraft were lost. In the eyes of the American public, though, it was a great success and morale skyrocketed as the nation prepared for World War II. The raid proved that Japan was vulnerable to an Allied attack, that it was no longer an invincible enemy. The raid also showed that bombers could take off from aircraft carriers and that the B-25 was capable of long combat missions.

Today in San Antonio, the remaining Doolittle Raiders are reuniting to remember their historical mission. They will remember their fellow Raiders who have since passed on, and turn their famed goblets upside down in their memory. Out of 80 goblets, less than 15 remain right-side up.

As Airmen in today's Air Force:

- It's important for all of us to remember historical events like Doolittle's raid over Tokyo which provides us our lasting heritage.
- We must learn the lessons from such missions, and to recognize the effect such missions had on the American public.
- We must remember that the Doolittle Raiders were just like us, a group of people from all across America, who left behind families and friends to defend America in the face of the enemy. Despite the odds, they depended on each other and performed courageously, showing how air power and Airmen are capable of changing and shaping history.

Find Airman's Roll Call Online Here: <http://www.af.mil/library/viewpoints/>

Airman's Roll Call is designed for supervisors at all levels to help keep Airmen informed on current issues, clear up confusion, dispel rumors, and provide additional face-to-face communication between supervisors and their teams.